

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-07 L-03 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /071 W  
-----114958 211216Z /13

O 211122Z DEC 77

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9976

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 6985

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PDEV, RH

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: MESSAGE FROM SITHOLE

1. ELLIOTT GABELLAH, SITHOLE'S SECOND VICE PRESIDENT, ARRIVED AT JAN SMUTS AIRPORT DECEMBER 20 WITHOUT NOTICE AND AFTER TELEPHONING WENT TO THE BRITISH EMBASSY TO DELIVER PACKETS FOR THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN AMBASSADORS ON BEHALF OF SITHOLE. THE PACKETS EACH CONTAINED A LETTER FROM SITHOLE, MINUTES OF THE FIRST FOUR SESSIONS OF THE SETTLEMENT TALKS WITH SMITH, THE TEXT OF THE DECEMBER 7 LETTER FROM SITHOLE TO NYERERE AND THE TEXT OF SITHOLE'S PRESS CONFERENCE IN SALISBURY ON DECEMBER 8. AFTER DISCUSSIONS WITH THE BRITISH CHARGE, GABELLAH RETURNED TO JAN SMUTS AND LEFT FOR RHODESIA THIS MORNING (DECEMBER 21).

2. THE EMBASSY IS SENDING BY SEPTTEL AN ANALYSIS OF  
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SITHOLE'S OBJECTIVES IN MAKING THIS APPROACH AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS ON OUR RESPONSE. IN ADDITION WE PREPARING  
AN ASSESSMENT OF THE STATUS OF THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT TALKS BASED ON

THE MINUTES PROVIDED BY SITHOLE AS WELL AS OTHER ACCOUNTS.  
WE WILL POUCH COPY OF MINUTES AND OTHER MATERIALS PROVIDED  
BY GABELLAH ON DECEMBER 23.

3. FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF THE BRITISH EMBASSY'S  
REPORT TO WOEN OF GABELLAH'S DISCUSSIONS WITH THEM:

QUOTE: DR. GABELLAH TOLD ME (CHARGE SUMMERHAYES) HIS MISSION  
HAD TWO PURPOSES. HE WANTED HMG TO BE FULLY BRIEFED ON THE  
PROGRESS OF THE TALKS SO THAT YOU MIGHT KNOW EXACTLY  
WHAT WAS HAPPENING AND SECONDLY HE WANTED TO SECURE THE  
ASSISTANCE OF HMG IN ENSURING THAT THE NATIONALISTS DO  
NOT BECOME ENGAGED IN SALISBURY ON A FUTILE EXERCISE.  
HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES FULLY REALIZED THAT IT WOULD BE  
FOR HMG TO GRANT INDEPENDENCE TO RHODESIA AND TO SECURE  
LEGITIMACY FOR ANY NEW GOVERNMENT. ANC (SITHOLE) WANTED  
HMG'S ADVICE IN ADVANCE IF IT APPEARED TO HMG THAT THERE  
WERE ASPECTS OF THE CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS WHICH WERE  
UNLIKELY TO LEAD TO A SATISFACTORY SETTLEMENT. THEY  
DID NOT WANT TO BE TOLD WHEN IT WAS ALL OVER THAT  
SUCH AND SUCH WAS UNACCEPTABLE.

IN DISCUSSION GABELLAH INDICATED THAT, ALTHOUGH THE  
TALKS HAD STARTED WELL WITH EARLY AGREEMENT ON SMITH'S  
PART TO ADULT SUFFRAGE AT 18, THE DISCUSSIONS ON SAFE-  
GUARDS FOR THE WHITE POPULATION WERE NOW LEADING THEM  
ONTO VERY DIFFICULT GROUND. THEY WERE FINDING THAT  
SMITH'S EIGHT SAFEGUARDS WERE VERY CLEVERLY DOVETAILED  
AND PRESENTED AN INTERLOCKING SYSTEM WHICH WAS CLEARLY  
DESIGNED TO MAINTAIN WHITE AUTHORITY OVER RHODESIA.  
THE SAFEGUARDS WOULD ENABLE SMITH, OR THE RHODESIAN  
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FRONT (THE DIFFERENCE WAS IMMATERIAL) TO RETAIN EFFECTIVE  
CONTROL. BY WAY OF EXAMPLE IT HAD BECOME APPARENT FROM  
THE COURSE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS THAT ZUPO WERE ACTING AS  
A MOUTH-PIECE OF SMITH. IN ANY PARLIAMENT IN WHICH  
THERE WAS A BUILT-IN ONE-THIRD WHITE SEATS IT WAS  
POSSIBLE TO ENVISAGE ZUPO ALSO GAINING ONE-THIRD OF THE  
SEATS, THUS GIVING A ZUPO-WHITE COALITION COMPLETE  
POWER.

GABELLAH SAID THAT AS REGARDS THE WHITE MEMBERS OF  
PARLIAMENT, THEY WERE PREPARED TO AGREE TO 20 SUCH  
MEMBERS IN A HOUSE OF 120, BUT ON THE CONDITION THAT  
THESE MEMBERS COULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO JOIN IN A COALITION  
WITH ANY OF THE BLACK PARTIES.

GABELLAH SAID THAT IN THE NEGOTIATIONS ANC (SITHOLE)  
AND UANC HAD BEEN WORKING WELL TOGETHER. IT HAD BEEN  
ANC (SITHOLE'S) WISH (VOICED AT THE TALKS) THAT THE  
PATRIOTIC FRONT SHOULD BE FIRMLY INVITED TO PARTICIPATE  
IN THE TALKS. GABELLAH DID NOT SEE ANY POSSIBILITY OF  
A SETTLEMENT WITHOUT THE PARTICIPATION OF NKOMO, SIMPLY  
BECAUSE NKOMO WAS "KING" OF THE NDEBELE AND 20 PERCENT  
OF THE RHODESIAN POPULATION WOULD NOT AGREE TO ANYTHING  
WHICH DID NOT INVOLVE NKOMO. MUGABE WAS A DIFFERENT

MATTER. HE DID NOT ENJOY ANY WIDE SUPPORT WITHIN RHODESIA AND THERE WAS A RANGE OF ALTERNATIVE ZANU LEADERS.

AS REGARDS THE DURATION OF THE CURRENT TALKS GABELLAH FELT THAT SMITH'S OBJECTIVE WAS TO SECURE A QUICK AGREEMENT TO THE PRINCIPLES OF A SETTLEMENT INCLUDING PARTICULARLY THE SAFEGUARDS FOR WHITES. THAT ACHIEVED THERE MIGHT BE A WHITE REFERENDUM TO ENDORSE THEM BUT THE MAIN POINT WAS THAT THE DRAFTING OF A CONSTITUTION ON THE BASIS OF AGREED PRINCIPLES COULD THEN TAKE A VERY LONG TIME INDEED AND THE FINE PRINT IN THE RESULTING CONSTITUTION COULD ERODE WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN GAINED DURING THE CURRENT DISCUSSIONS. GABELLAH BELIEVED IT VERY POSSIBLE THAT THE PRESENT

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DISCUSSIONS MIGHT RUN INTO THE SAND WITHOUT ANY AGREEMENT BEING SECURED.

GABELLAH ADMITTED TO CONSIDERABLE CONCERN THAT, IF THE PRESENT NEGOTIATIONS DID NOT REACH A SATISFACTORY CONCLUSION, THE NATIONALIST LEADERS INVOLVED MIGHT BE DISCREDITED AMONG THEIR OWN PEOPLE. THEY WERE THEREFORE ANXIOUS TO TRY TO ACHIEVE A SATISFACTORY OUTCOME BUT IT WAS ESSENTIAL FOR THEM THAT SUCH AN OUTCOME SHOULD BE INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE. THIS WAS THE BACKGROUND AGAINST WHICH THEY SOUGHT HMG'S ADVICE ON THE PROGRESS OF THEIR NEGOTIATIONS.

GABELLAH EMPHASIZED THAT IT WAS THEIR INTENTION (AND THIS POINT IS ALSO MADE IN SITHOLE'S LETTER COVERING THE DOCUMENTS) TO KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH US ON THE PROGRESS OF THE TALKS. BUT HE WAS NOT EXPLICIT ON THE CHANNEL FOR THIS. END QUOTE

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